

Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival National Launch
1st September 2009, Filmhouse, Edinburgh



Back Row - Tom, Stephanie, Allan, Hazel, Jackie, Lesley, Anne Dowie, Anne Ross, Sarah and Christine.

Front Row - Eileen, Noreen, Jeanette and Jane

It was just Friday 14th August when Jane made an exciting announcement on The Buddy Beat website. The Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival was being launched nationally on Tuesday 1st September in Edinburgh and Buddy Beat was asked to come along and be part of the event!

News spread quickly, with the excitement almost sliceable and very soon 14 of us signed up giving an almost unprecedented 75% turnout.

The Buddy Beaters were-Jeanette Allan, Jane Bentley, Allan Borland, Hazel Borland, Tom Chalmers, Stephanie Crew-Holmes, Anne Dowie, Lesley King, Jackie McDowall, Eileen McGrory, Christine Robertson, Anne Ross, Noreen Young, Sarah Van Der Molen and not forgetting our intrepid driver Martin.

Jeanette had secured the Dykebar Hospital minibus and left there at 8.20am to meet the rest of us at The Lagoon Leisure Centre in Paisley. Lesley and Jane had met Jeanette at Dykebar and were already on board, with Jane's drum collection packed in the back. One worry was with Sarah, who had problems travelling from Bishopton when the trains were cancelled, but she wasn't to be deterred and motored through by taxi to meet us on time. Super effort, Sarah!

Once we had fitted everyone snugly in to the minibus, Martin set off. The journey passed by pleasantly enough and Anne R was fortunate to share in half of Stephanie's buttie and it seemed the closer we got to Edinburgh the better the weather looked and for a short time we were leaving Paisley's incessant precipitation behind. Eileen "Candy Shop" McGrory kept us all chewing with her ample supply of sweets from her Mary Poppins bag, which bizarrely contained, amongst many items, a supply of Polly-Grip. The mind boggles.

Once in Edinburgh, Martin found he didn't need his sat-nav system, as Christine, who sat in the front pointed him this way and that due to her extensive knowledge of Edinburgh's streets after many sightseeing trips to the nation's capital. By 10.30 we had found our way to the venue which was situated in Lothian Road at The Filmhouse.



Here are Christine and Sarah upon arrival in Edinburgh. “You’ve got to have friends.....”



Anne D- “I’m gonna be first in!”

We quickly unpacked and Martin disappeared to find a parking space for the bus. We hurried in to the cinema and set up at the right side of the stage. Jane organised us into two rows, one sitting on the stage and the other on a row of chairs looking out to the auditorium. A quick warm-up and the doors opened around 10.40. Martin had returned sporting his camera and Buddy Beat played while the 200 or so press and selected guests filled the hall. Jane worked some Call and Response, splitting the group in two and also one half playing softly while the other loudly, and various exercises which seemed to set the right tone and provided the perfect back drop for the guests taking their seats and chatting amongst themselves.



Jane- "It's a new game- Spot the Noreen!"



Jane- ""Where's the popcorn?"



Our Christine- navigator, tour guide and drummer!

When the organiser took to the podium to thank Buddy Beat for performing, we received a hearty round of applause. Three speakers in turn spoke about the launch and we were informed that nationally there are over 200 events in more than 100 venues, making it the biggest Festival yet. That was followed by a short film whereby all the Scottish regions were represented and had a chance to say what they were doing themselves during the Festival and what they hoped this would bring to their own community. The proceeding were wrapped up by Motherwell born poet Liz Lochhead who read two of her poems and also told us her aspirations for the Festival and her humour shone through and left everyone feeling lifted. (A bit of Buddy Beat trivia here- Liz Lochhead was Jeanette Allan's former art teacher- you heard it here 1st!)



Poet Liz Lochhead



Some of the gang jamming as the audience made their way out.

As the audience made their way out of the cinema Buddy beat grabbed their drums and jammed for five minutes to round things off.

After we packed our drums away and while Martin retrieved the bus, Buddy Beat found their way into the rather busy and chat-filled Filmhouse Cafe/Bar to fill some rumbling tums and thirst quenched throats.



Tom and Anne Dowie with their identical drums. “And you said we had nothing in common, Anne!”

It was then suggested by Christine (I think!) that we should all pile into the bus and go over to Arthur’s Seat. Christine sat upfront and assisted Martin and once we were there, it was decided that we should instead visit the nearby Scottish Parliament. After a few group photos taken by Martin, Christine, who had earlier adorned her Tour Guide persona pointing out various Edinburgh landmarks, led us into Parliament.



The Buddy Beat 14 minus 1- Stephanie is hiding behind the stone lion.



“It’s this way everyone! Keep up!”



*Jane- “Who said let’s go to the pub instead?
Anne D- “That wins my vote!””*

Inside on the ground level we found a though provoking photography exhibition. We all sort of drifted apart and split up. Some made their way to the restaurant for lunch, some discovered the gift shop, while others found their way up to view the impressive debating chamber where all the action takes place, although, thankfully parliament was not in session. If it had been, Jeanette may have organised a surprise gig for Alex Salmond and his gang!



Sarah inside the Chamber (of horrors)



Here we have President Bentley with her cabinet. Girl Power!

After almost an hour being tourists we trotted back to the bus and headed back to Paisley. It had been a busy and long day for some of us and more than one Buddy Beater nodded off. 7 and 1/2 hours after first meeting, we arrived back in Paisley.

It was another great Buddy Beat day out and although we have travelled farther, never has there been a gig with so many members in attendance, which helped make it all the more special. Today was also the Buddy Beat gig debut for three of our gang- Allan, Stephanie and Jackie and perhaps were understandably nervous beforehand, but came through with flying colours and were glad they had taken the plunge. Stephanie was beside herself to discover that Michael Schumaker's racing car was just yards along the street and couldn't resist a photo opportunity.



Stephanie- "Right, you lot can get the bus back. I've sorted out my own transport!"

The End